

1 WHY WE NEED Smart Growth

Maryland's Growing Pains



When Captain John Smith first sailed upon the Chesapeake Bay four centuries ago to the present site of the Bay Bridge, he was awed by the verdant landscape along its shores, of which he wrote: "Heaven and earth never agreed better to frame a place for man's habitation."

Today, that landscape looks very different. And Maryland's rich heritage of vibrant cities, fertile farms, Civil War battlefields, 17th century settlements and the bounty of the Bay is threatened by the very prosperity that continues to draw newcomers.

The State's population grows by nearly 1,000 residents every week, but it is the pattern of development, rather than the pace of growth, that is causing problems. From the tidal marshes of the Eastern Shore to the Appalachian Mountains on West, from rural hamlets to metropolitan Baltimore, Maryland is suffering from the harmful impacts of urban sprawl.

Over the past 50 years, as the State's population more than doubled to 5.3 million, people started moving farther and farther from established communities.

In the last three decades alone, Maryland's population increased by 37%, while the amount of land developed to accommodate these people grew more than three times as fast, by 124%.

The most obvious consequence of this spreading out has been an alarming loss of green space to subdivisions and strip malls. But there have been other harmful impacts.

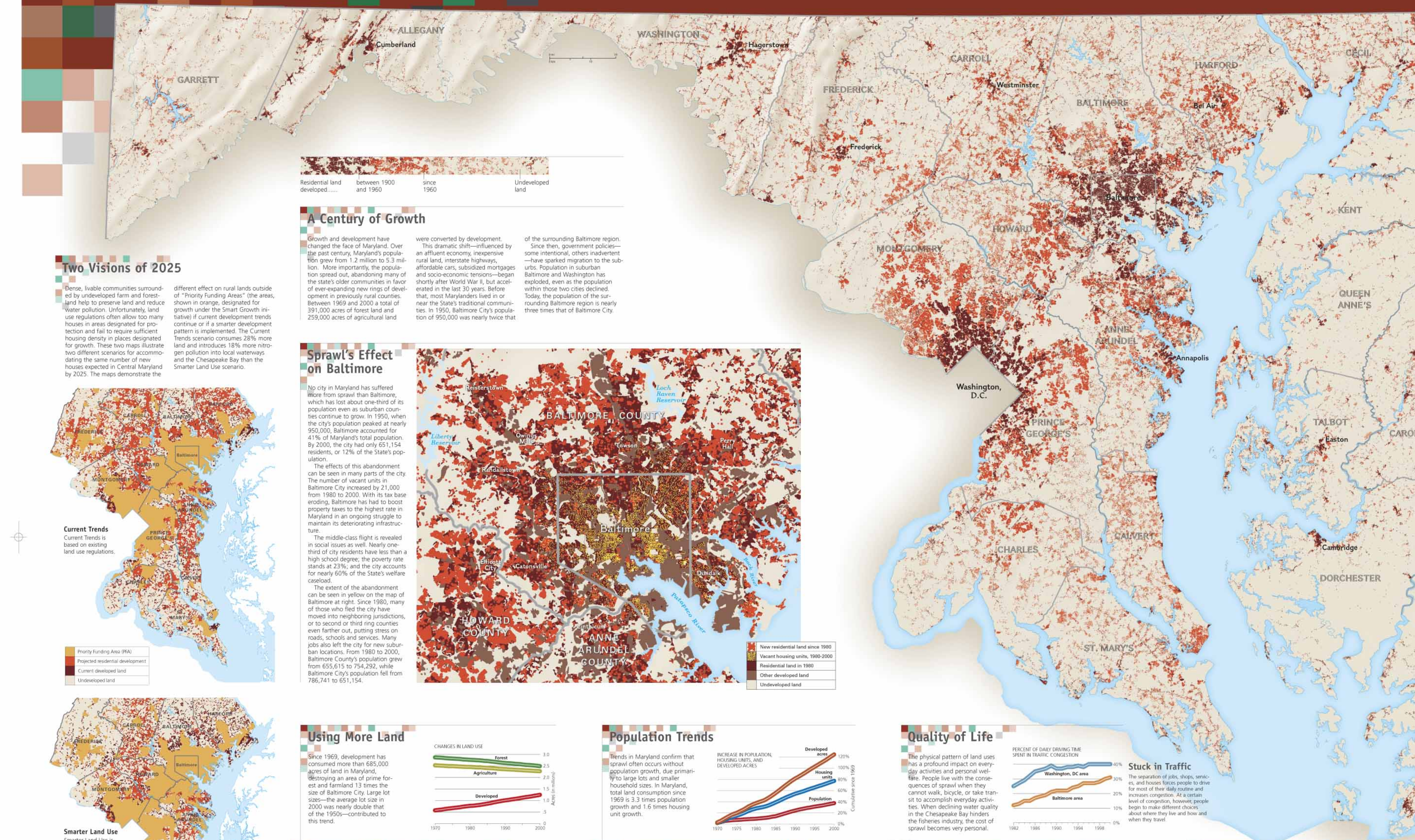
People today are more dependent on cars, and the extra driving hurts air quality. The pavement crisscrossing the Bay watershed carries more pollution into this once thriving estuary. Wildlife habitat and productive farmland are disappearing. And older communities have been abandoned, left with boarded-up buildings, deteriorating roads and schools and pockets of concentrated poverty.

Maryland's Smart Growth Initiative is a comprehensive effort to halt these and other harmful effects of sprawl.

The goal is to encourage more efficient patterns of development by targeting State funding for new roads and other infrastructure needs to established communities. At the same time, the State is spending more money on land preservation in a race to save its remaining farms, woods and wetlands. With that simple formula, Smart Growth is making a difference across the State.

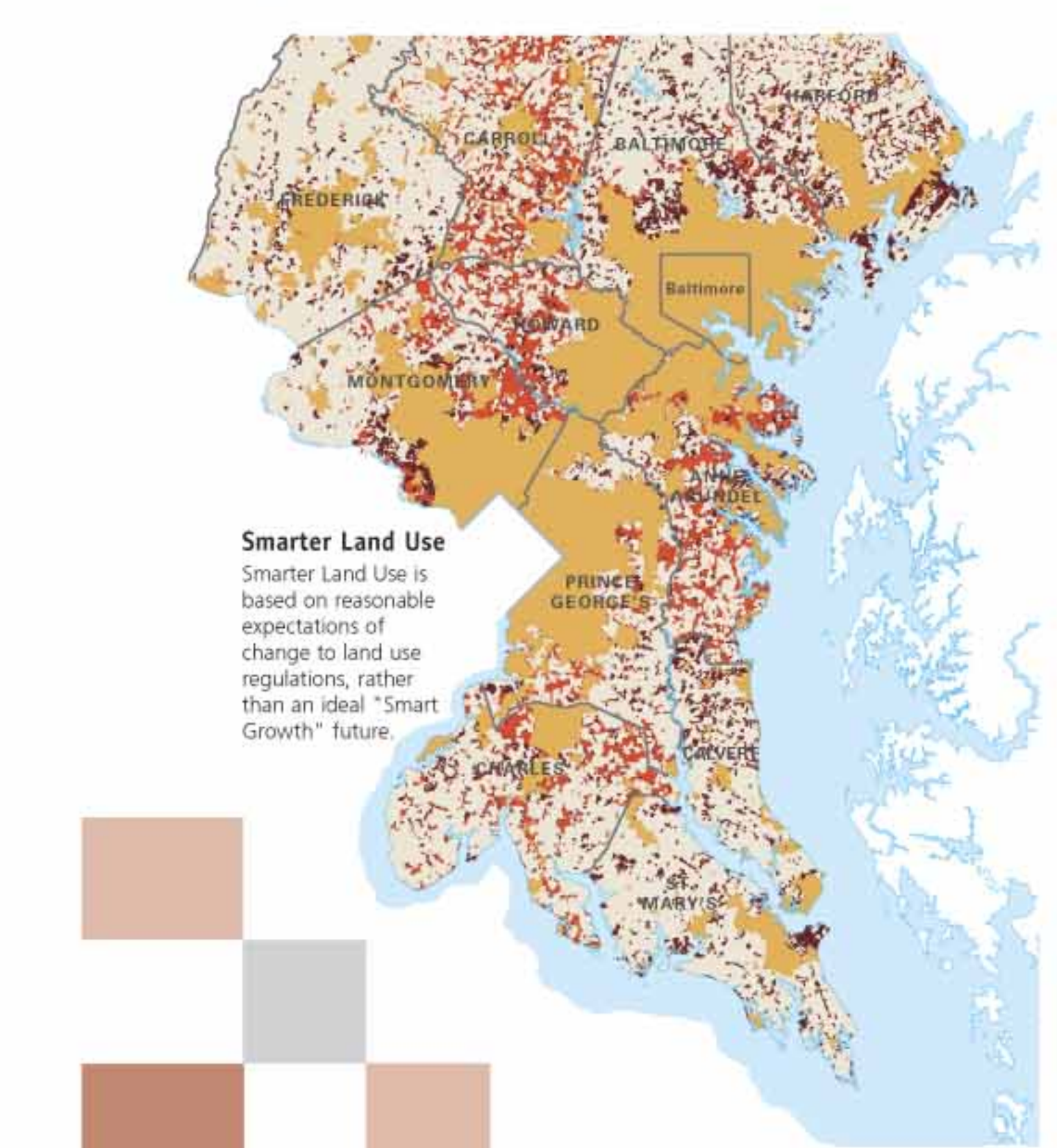
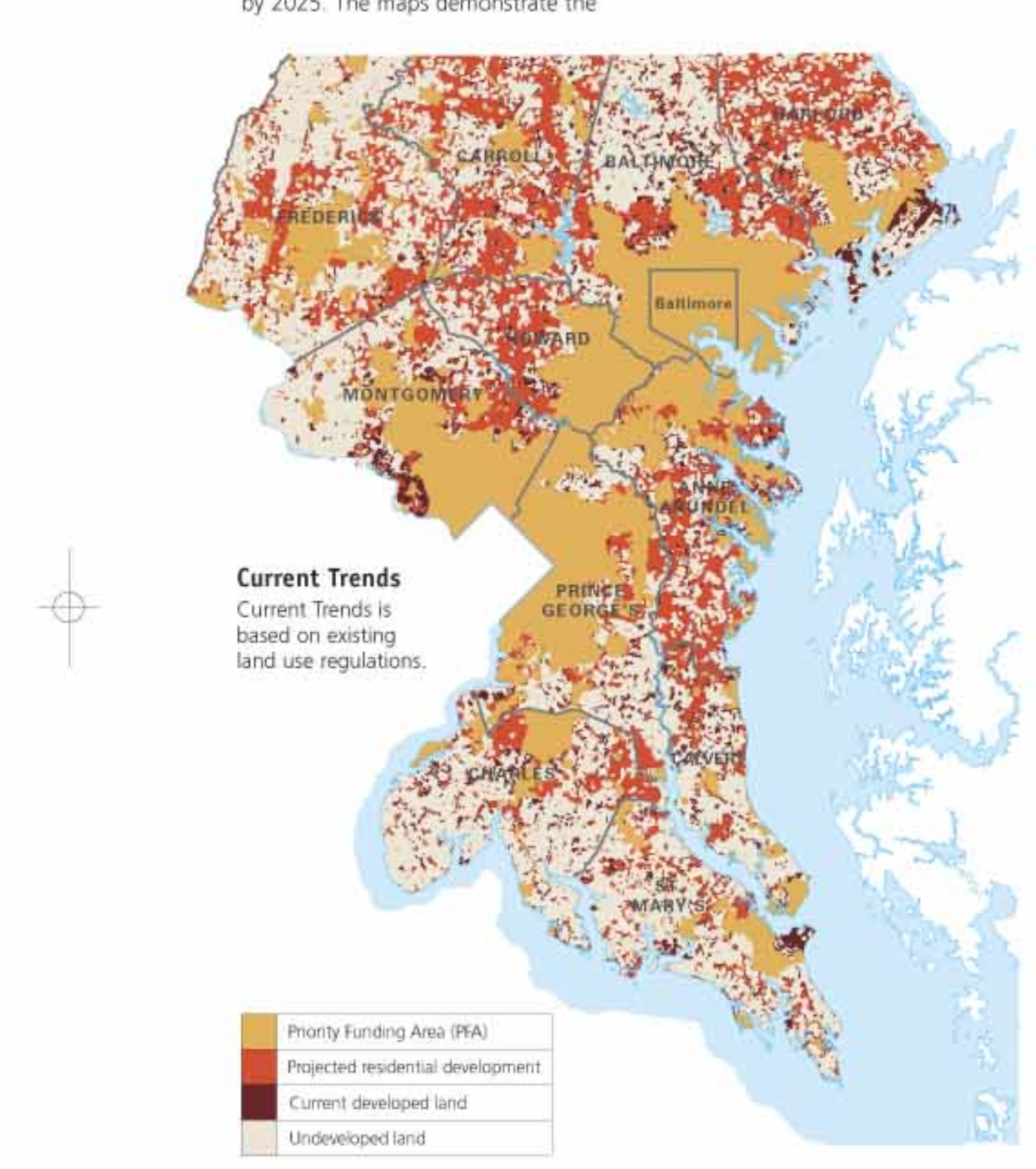


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Two Visions of 2025

Dense, livable communities surrounded by undeveloped farm and forest land help to preserve land and reduce water pollution. Unfortunately, land use regulations often allow too many houses in areas designated for protection and fail to require sufficient housing density in places designated for growth. These two maps illustrate two different scenarios for accommodating the same number of new houses expected in Central Maryland by 2025. The maps demonstrate the



A Century of Growth

Growth and development have changed the face of Maryland. Over the past century, Maryland's population grew from 1.2 million to 5.3 million. More importantly, the population spread out, abandoning many of the state's older communities in favor of ever-expanding new rings of development in previously rural counties. Between 1969 and 2000 a total of 391,000 acres of forest land and 259,000 acres of agricultural land were converted by development. This dramatic shift—influenced by an affluent economy, inexpensive rural land, interstate highways, affordable cars, subsidized mortgages and socio-economic tensions—began shortly after World War II, but accelerated in the last 30 years. Before that, most Marylanders lived in or near the State's traditional communities. In 1950, Baltimore City's population of 950,000 was nearly twice that of the surrounding Baltimore region. Since then, government policies—some intentional, others inadvertent—have sparked migration to the suburbs. Population in suburban Baltimore and Washington has exploded, even as the population within those two cities declined. Today, the population of the surrounding Baltimore region is nearly three times that of Baltimore City.

